

BILL MCCARTNEY AND ROME

November 19, 1996 (Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org) -

The following is from the Berean Call (PO. Box 7019, Bend, Oregon 97708), November 1996

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QUESTION [composite of several]: In September you referred to "PK's Roman Catholic founder, Bill McCartney." Coach McCartney is not a Catholic, nor does he attend a Catholic Church, but a Vineyard. I assume he was raised as a Catholic, but to continue to call him one would be erroneous. Also you say that McCartney "declared that every Protestant and Catholic was welcome to participate." I was there and heard him say that, but the context was that anybody and everybody was welcome to come to the PK conference in much the same way that anybody is welcome to come to our church's worship service on Sunday morning. ... Furthermore, Glen Wagner, representing the PK speakers and leadership, clearly said to us all, "We believe in justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. And if you don't agree with us on that you're not a part of Promise Keepers," and there was a thunderous applause. I would encourage you to attend at least one PK conference or even speak to one of their representatives before criticizing them. There are many Catholics, Orthodox, etc. who attend these rallies, hear a clear gospel presentation and come to know Christ. There is no need to name every false religion and explain how wrong they are ... just preach what is true and they will come [to know Christ].

ANSWER: Bill McCartney was a lifetime devout Roman Catholic who attended Mass daily until he visited the Boulder Vineyard Fellowship, liked the pastor's preaching, and began attending there. He has never broken with the Catholic Church. If he has, then let us hear it from him: when he left Romanism and why --i.e., what was wrong with it that caused him to leave and why he would seek to rescue other Catholics from its errors. Any ex-Catholic I have ever known came out of that church because of having come to know the Lord Jesus Christ personally as Savior, and thereafter desired to see other Catholics delivered from Rome's false gospel. In contrast, McCartney accepts Catholics as Christians and sees no reason to evangelize them.

In his autobiography, *From Ashes to Glory*, McCartney admits that as a "daily communicant in the Catholic Church" he "had never been encouraged to read the Bible, so ... knew nothing about the Word of God" and "had been totally without a clue about what it's like to be a whole-hearted, committed Christian" (p 110). Those statements alone condemn Catholicism! He then tells what he apparently offers as his conversion story (pp. 110-13) and calls himself a "born-again Catholic." In fact, it sounds like a "dedication" of his life to Christ, as though he thinks he was already saved and is confusing "sanctification" with "salvation."

His next statement is even more confusing: "Making a profession of faith like I did may not be expected and may not even be important in the Catholic church." This is an astounding declaration if he has just related how he got saved! No ex-Catholic who has come to faith in Christ as his Savior would ever say that to do so would not be essential for other Catholics. In fact, he would insist that they, like all mankind, are lost and on their way to hell until they receive Christ and look to Him alone for their eternal salvation instead of to their Church and its sacraments. Clearly McCartney has no such conviction.

As for "salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone," Roman Catholic apologists insist that this is what their church teaches. That is why it is not enough, as you suggest, simply to "preach what is true" without pointing out error. All Catholics agree that Christ died for their sins, was buried and rose again the third day and that "salvation" is received by grace. In addition, however, Catholicism teaches that "the graces and merits Christ won on the cross" can only be received by the individual through the sacraments of the Church, and then only in partial installments. No one ever gets saved and has assurance of going to heaven. Even the pope lacks that assurance, as we have pointed out. Thus even a clear gospel message at a Promise Keepers rally will likely be understood by Roman Catholics and Mormons only in the context of their religious indoctrination and therefore will not save them. The Catholic and Mormon "convert" is sent back to his church for the PK small group follow-up. The very fact that both the Roman Catholic and Mormon churches have officially declared that they find no conflict between PK teaching and their own doctrines ought to tell you that something is seriously wrong.